

COMMISSION MEMBERS

James Hester, FAICP

*Chair*

Toni D. Drake, Esq

*Vice Chair*

Robert Scaggs

Kenneth P. Dahms

Maxene Bardwell

James Kole, *Alternate*



COMMISSION STAFF

Martin A. Flemion  
*City Administrator*

Wennesa Bell Snoddy  
*Counsel to the Commission*

Lena Grant  
*Administrative Assistant II*

## CITY OF LAUREL ETHICS COMMISSION

8103 Sandy Spring Road • Laurel, Maryland 20707 (301) 725-5300

Internet Address: <https://www.cityoflaurel.org/boards/commissions/laurel-ethics-commission>

September 26, 2018



### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Craig A. Moe, Mayor  
Michael R. Leszcz, Laurel Council President  
Laurel City Councilmembers

**FROM:** James Hester, Chair

**SUBJECT:** City of Laurel Ethics Commission Annual Report  
September 2017 – September 2018

The City of Laurel Ethics Commission annual report to the Mayor and City Council is provided in accordance with City Ethics Ordinance 1722. The Commission consists of the following members:

- a. James Hester, FAICP, Chair
- b. Toni Drake, Esq, Vice Chair
- c. Thomas Scaggs
- d. Maxene Bardwell
- e. Kenneth Dahms
- f. James Kole, Alternate

Regular meetings are scheduled quarterly with public notice provided. Special meetings are scheduled as required with public notice provided. All members routinely attended the Commission meetings. No member missed more than one meeting during this reporting period. The Commission met in its regular meetings three times during the calendar year.

- a. October 24, 2017
- b. January 23, 2018
- c. July 24, 2018

Attached are the agenda and approved minutes of those meetings. All submitted Financial Disclosure Statements have been submitted, reviewed and filed.

The primary activity of the Commission this year was the review of the City Ethics Ordinance 1722, Section 2-56, Financial Disclosure – Elected Officials, appointed officials, candidates and employees. Also discussed was gifts received over the \$20.00 maximum that were reported on Financial Disclosure Statements submitted by two candidates for City Council.



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**Laurel Ethics Commission  
Agenda  
Tuesday, October 24, 2017  
7:00 P.M.**

1. Open Meeting, Take Roll Call, and Determine if Quorum is Present
2. Discuss and Adopt Agenda for Tuesday, October 24, 2017
3. Discuss and Approve the Minutes from Tuesday, July 25, 2017
4. Invite any member of the public who are present who wish to address the LEC to come forward and speak
5. Work Session
  - a. Report from staff on results of Board of Elections decisions on confirming candidates for Council Member positions in next month's City election.
  - b. Report on response letter to incoming letter from a candidate alleging possible slander by another candidate
  - c. Discussion on proposed draft legislative fixes for perfecting the clarity in language regarding Financial Disclosure Statement for candidates for elective office to avoid the problems that arose in this year's process. See draft October 2017 language
6. Other business Commissioners or Staff wish to raise
7. Setting of the Date and Time for the next meeting of the LEC

COMMISSION  
MEMBERS

James Hester, *FAICP*  
*Chair*

Toni Drake, *Esquire*  
*Vice Chair*

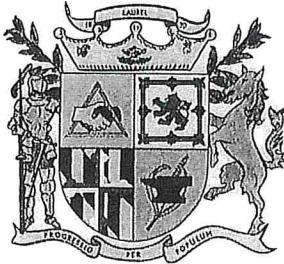
Kenneth Dahms

Maxene Bardwell

Robert Scaggs

Diane Bicjan (Alternate)

COMMISSION ST/



**City of Laurel, Maryland**

COMMISSION  
STAFF

Martin A. Flemion  
*City Administrator*

Dennis Whitley, III  
*Legal Counsel*

Lena Grant  
*Administrative  
Support*

**Ethics Commission**

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**Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, October 24, 2017  
Meeting Room 4**

The Ethics Commission Meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m. with Chairman James Hester presiding in Meeting Room 4. Roll was called with the following Commissioners present; Toni Drake, Vice Chair; Maxene Bardwell, Commissioner; and Kenneth Dahms, Commissioner. Also present; Wennesa Snoddy, Legal Counsel, Marty Flemion, Ex officio; Pat Haag, Risk Management Officer and Lena Grant, Administrative Assistant.

On a motion by Commissioner Dahms and seconded by Vice Chair Drake the Agenda for tonight's meeting was approved on a voice call vote.

On a motion by Commissioner Bardwell and seconded by Commissioner Dahms, the meeting minutes of July 24, 2017, were approved, as corrected, on a voice call vote.

Chairman Hester opened and closed the General Public Hearing at 7:10 p.m. with no one present wishing to speak.

Mr. Flemion presented the Commission members with the Official 2017 Council election Ballot.

Chairman Hester discussed a letter he received from one candidate running in the City Council election. He alleges the slander by another candidate. Mr. Hester decided not to bring this matter before the Ethics Commission because the person is not a City employee. Mr. Hester stated that the matter has been directed to the Board of Elections Supervisors by a letter drafted by Ms. Snoddy.

At this time, Mr. Hester held a lengthy discussion ensued on the matter of this year's election process as related to Financial Disclosures for candidates running for elected office. After the discussion concluded, Chairman Hester provided the members of the Commission a copy of his revisions to the current Ethics Ordinance with his suggested changes. He asked the members to review his suggested changes and provide him with any comments, corrections or additions as soon as possible so they may be discussed collectively at the next meeting.

With no other business coming before the Commission, Commissioner Dalms made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Bardwell the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

*Patricia A. Haag*  
Patricia A. Haag  
Risk Management Officer

COMMISSION MEMBERS

James Hester, FAICP  
*Chair*

Toni Drake, Esquire  
*Vice Chair*

Tommy Scaggs

Kenneth P. Dahms

Maxene Bardwell



COMMISSION STAFF

Martin A. Flemion  
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**Agenda**  
**Tuesday, January 23, 2018**  
**7:00 P.M.**

1. Open Meeting, Take Roll Call, and Determine if Quorum is Present
2. Discuss and Adopt Minutes for Tuesday, October 24, 2017
3. Invite any member of the public who are present who wish to address the LEC to come forward and speak
4. Work Session
  - a. Discuss, edit, and approve short and long Financial Disclosure Statement forms covering 2017
  - b. Discuss and decide steps to be taken regarding gifts over \$20 maximum reported on Financial Disclosure Statements submitted by two candidates for City Council who were subsequently elected
  - c. Continued discussion on Financial Disclosure Statement requirement for elected official candidates in future elections
  - d. Announcement of the annual election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Ethics Commission at the upcoming April meeting
5. Other business Commissioners or Staff wish to raise
6. Setting of the Date and Time for the next meeting of the LEC

COMMISSION MEMBERS

James Hester, FAICP  
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*Vice Chair*  
Robert Scaggs  
Kenneth P. Dahms  
Maxene Bardwell



COMMISSION STAFF

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## CITY OF LAUREL ETHICS COMMISSION

8103 Sandy Spring Road • Laurel, Maryland 20707 (301) 725-5300

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### Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 23, 2018

### Council Chambers

The Ethics Commission meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. with Chairman James Hester presiding in the Council Chambers. Roll was called with the following Commissioners present: Toni Drake, Vice Chair; Kenneth Dahms, Commissioner and Thomas Scaggs, Commissioner. Also present; Wennessee Snoddy, Legal Counsel, Marty Flemion, Ex officio, Pat Haag, Risk Management Officer and Lena Grant, Administrative Assistant.

On a motion by Commissioner Dahms and seconded by Commissioner Scaggs, the Agenda for tonight's meeting was approved on a voice call vote.

On a motion by Vice Chair Drake and seconded by Commissioner Dahms, the meeting minutes from October 24, 2017 were approved as corrected on a voice call vote.

Chairman Hester opened and closed the General Public Hearing at 7:10 p.m. with no one present that wishes to speak.

Council President Michael Leszcz was invited to the Ethics Commission Meeting to discuss his Financial Disclosure Statement where he stated he attended a dinner at the summer Conference for Maryland Municipal League. President Leszcz explained that he felt like he should disclose it. Chairman Hester asked Mr. Leszcz if he would make a donation to the City in the amount of \$20.00. Chairman Hester stated that Council President should payback the difference to the City. Commissioner Scaggs felt it was not necessary along with Commissioner Dahms and Vice Chair Drake who also stated that Mr. Leszcz gave a description of what happened on his statement and did not disclose about it. Ms. Snoddy asked if this was going to be something the Commission is going to do case by case. President Leszcz presented Mr. Flemion a check for \$20.00 for the City.

Councilmember Frederick Smalls was invited to the Ethics Commission Meeting to discuss his Financial Disclosure Statement. Councilmember Smalls accepted a gift of ceremony scissors valued at \$100. Mr. Smalls explained he accepted the scissors when he was attending the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Town Center. The scissors he estimated to be worth \$100.00.

Mr. Smalls stated they scissors were more of a momentum to him than a gift. Chairman Hester stated maybe give the scissors to the City and they can be used at City ribbon cutting ceremonies or the City can decide on what to do with them. Mr. Smalls stated that he will give the scissors back to the City and do editorial changes to his Financial Disclosure Statement.

Discussions began for edits to the Financial Disclosure statements at length. The words "Annual Mandatory" was added to the Simplified Financial Disclosure Statement along with some minor edits in the instructions.

On a motion by Commissioner Dahms and seconded by Commissioner Scaggs, the changes to the Simplified Financial Disclosure Statement was approved on a voice call vote.

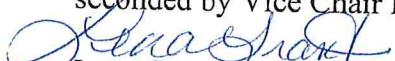
The word "Advanced" was removed from the Advanced Financial Disclosure Statement and "Annual Mandatory" was added along with instructions and definition pages.

On a motion by Commissioner Dahms and seconded by Commissioner Scaggs, the changes to the Advanced Financial Disclosure Statement was approved on a voice call vote.

The Commission discussed Councilmember DeWalt's Financial Disclosure Statement as it refers to his employment and it is unclear who his employer is. Mr. Hester asked Ms. Snoddy to write a letter to Councilmember DeWalt for clarification.

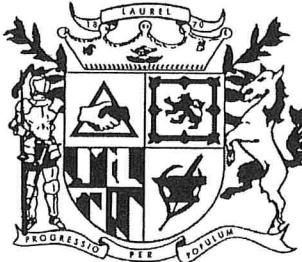
Chairman Hester stated the next meeting will be held on April 24, 2018 and that the elections for Chairman and Vice Chairman will be held.

With no other business coming before the Commission, Commissioner Dahm made a motion, seconded by Vice Chair Drake the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

  
Lena Grant  
Administrative Assistant

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*Chair*  
Toni Drake  
*Vice Chair*  
Kenneth Dahms  
Maxene Bardwell  
  
Tommy Scaggs  
  
Vacant (Alternate)



COMMISSION STAFF

Martin Flemon  
*City Administrator*  
  
*Legal Counsel*  
  
*Administrative Support*

**CITY OF LAUREL, MARYLAND**

**ETHICS COMMISSION**

8103 Sandy Spring Road • Laurel, Maryland 20707 (301) 725-5300  
Internet Address <http://www.laurel.md.us>

Laurel Ethics Commission  
Agenda  
Council Chambers  
Tuesday, July 24, 2018  
7:00 P.M.

1. Open Meeting, Take Roll Call, Determine if Quorum is Present
2. Discuss and Adopt Agenda for Tuesday, July 24, 2018
3. Discuss and Approve the Minutes from Tuesday, January 23, 2018. There are no minutes from April 24, 2018 as there was not a quorum to hold a meeting on that date
4. Invite any member of the public who are present who wish to address the LEC to come forward and speak
5. Work Session
  - a. Annual Nominations and Voting for Chair and Vice Chair of the Ethics Commission for the 12 months retroactively beginning in April, 2018 (a lack of a quorum for the April 2018 meeting prevented the annual election from occurring)
  - b. Discuss letters to two appointed officials who have not submitted FDSs
  - c. Report from the subcommittee of the Ethics Commission who reviewed received FDSs, request any needed corrections and report back to the full Ethics Commission
  - d. Report from staff on the status of a revised request from the Mayor on proposed revisions to the Ethics Ordinance clarifying the roles of the Ethics Commission and the Board of Elections Supervisors on Financial Disclosure Statements of candidates for Laurel public office
  - e. Report from Counsel on the status of the letter from her to Mr. DeWalt inviting him to request a request for an advisory opinion
  - f. Discuss draft Maryland Senate Bill 474 and its potential effect on Laurel's Ethics Ordinance
6. Other business Commissioners or Staff wish to raise
7. Setting of the Date and Time for the next meeting of the LEC